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Klaus Dutz in memoriam

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Jan Noordegraaf

Klaus Dutz in memoriam

A few personal words¹

It was only a few weeks ago that Peter Schmitter sent me an e-mail asking me to say a few words today in memory of Klaus Dutz. We agreed that it was much too early to give a well-balanced account of what Klaus Dutz had meant to us and to the community of linguistic historiographers at large. Consequently, Peter and I decided that each of us would discuss some aspects of Klaus' life and work at this session. But I shall never know what Peter Schmitter intended to say about his long-time friend and brother-in-arms, for he died most unexpectedly, in Seoul on 12 June 2006. So, it is with great sadness that I stand here alone, in order to say a few personal words about a good friend of mine, the publisher of five of my books, the publisher of many other books, and a good colleague – Klaus D. Dutz, the man from Münster whom I have known for almost twenty years and whose interests were so close to my own.²

The main facts are quickly told. He was born on 13 July 1953 and died on 25 March 2006. The *Trauerfeier* took place on 30 March 2006 in Münster. Sitting on the bench in the *Kapelle* of the Mauritz-Friedhof and listening to the music, my thoughts wandered back to the time that Klaus and I first met, some twenty years ago.

The year was 1987. It was late August when the Fourth International Conference on the History of Linguistics took place in Trier, Germany. A colleague and I stayed in a certain Hotel Weiss, in a rural setting outside the city centre. Sitting at a table in the dining room we observed an elderly German gentleman drinking wine. It was Hans Arens (1911-2003), the editor of the well-known anthology of the history of linguistics. *Es ist nur Landwein, aber es schmeckt*, Arens remarked as he sipped. One evening, a much younger couple shared a table with him and we decided to join them. They were Klaus Dutz and Angelika Rüter, from Münster. Klaus was a lean scholar in his early thirties, dressed in the then common denim jacket. He was scheduled to give [5] a paper on 'Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz und Johann Georg von Eckhart: Ein unveröffentlicher Disput über die Methodologie der Sprachwissenschaft' on Thursday, 27 August. I had seen Klaus at an earlier ICHoLS conference, the one in Lille in 1981, but we did not make each other's acquaintance then.

At the hotel table we had a discussion about the pro and cons of large-scale meetings such as ICHoLS, where *Platzhirsche*, as Klaus called them, men of importance, seemed to play a major role. We concluded that it could be rewarding to have more informal meetings with colleagues in Germany and the Netherlands who were conducting research on the history of linguistics. And so it was that the Studienkreis series of international conferences was born.

¹ Address delivered during the XVIIIth International Colloquium of the Studienkreis 'Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft', Leiden, the Netherlands, on 28 June 2006.

² For a concise overview of the life and works of both Klaus Dutz and Peter Schmitter I would like to refer the reader to the necrologies by Barbara Kaltz in *Histoire Épistémologie Langage* XXVIII (2006), 5-8.

It was on Friday 17 June 1988, a hot summer day, that the first international colloquium of the Studienkreis, organized by Dutz and Schmitter, took place in Münster; Dutch and German scholars attended. More conferences were to follow; the second one took place in the Netherlands in 1989, organized in cooperation with a Belgian *équipe* headed by Pierre Swiggers from Louvain. The third conference was held in Luxembourg in 1990. And these conferences have been a regular fixture on the academic calendar ever since.

There is a second memory of the Trier Conference I would like to share with you today. During the plenary meeting at the end of the conference, hectic as usual, a discussion arose about the publication of the conference proceedings. Then, to the right of me, somewhere in the back, Klaus Dutz stood up and declared that he as the director of Nodus Publikationen was willing to publish all the 'Kurzbeiträge', the short contributions which were not to be included in the 'official' proceedings. Many participants were pleasantly surprised by this proposal, but wondered whether it could really be done. They needn't have. The young German publisher delivered on his promise, and a Nodus book of over 400 pages, entitled *Speculum historiographiae linguisticae*, appeared well ahead of the 'official' proceedings.³

Nodus Publikationen, an enterprise which Klaus created in order to realize a number of his scholarly ambitions, also proved to be a welcome place to host another initiative. In 1991 a new international journal was launched, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft*, which has seen 15 volumes up to now. The editors were Klaus Dutz and Peter Schmitter, and together with Stefano Gensini and the late Vivien Law (1954-2002) I had the honour of serving as an associate editor. At the time there were two other full-fledged journals devoted to the history of linguistics, *Historiographia Linguistica* and *Histoire Épistémologie Langage*. But I know for sure that Klaus never wished to compete [6] with these journals: he wanted to give the *Beiträge* its own identity. On the one hand, it was a serious enterprise: the editors have always aimed to publish actual results of sound scholarly work but also wanted to host metahistoriographical discussions. Moreover, it was meant to be a pluralistic periodical, providing its readers with an open forum for discussion. Such was the spirit in which Klaus Dutz always wished to work. On the other hand, the *Beiträge* also allowed room for what Klaus called 'Augenzwinkern', for a playful approach and a light touch that is so often lacking in our disciplinary activities.

Klaus Dutz was one of the founding fathers of the Studienkreis Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft, a driving force behind the *Beiträge*, and a publisher who was associated with the Henry Sweet Society and had close contacts with the Dutch Werkverband Geschiedenis van de Taalwetenschap. He was one of the most passionate people I have ever known in our field of research and I feel that we are greatly indebted to his organizational energies and his editorial skills, as well to his efforts as a Leibniz scholar.

However, he was not a narrow-minded specialist. Klaus had a knack for putting matters in perspective. In his e-mails, you could often find a 'smiley'. And when I visited Münster I always enjoyed his and Angelika's hospitality, as we joked during long and animated conversations about people, new books and the ups and downs of academic life.

At the end of last year I still had not finished editing a book that was to be published by Nodus. Klaus sent me an urgent e-mail: please hurry, we are behind schedule. I assumed, however, that we still had a world of time, time to make new books, to make new plans. But I was terribly wrong.

³ Klaus Dutz (Hrsg.), *Speculum historiographiae linguisticae . Kurzbeiträge der IV. Internationalen Konferenz zur Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaften (ICHoLS IV) Trier, 24.-27. August 1987*. Münster: Nodus Publikationen 1989. 422 pp.

Without Klaus Dutz several aspects of my life would have been different. He was like a prophet from times long past thought that a friend, that a man should be: 'A man shall be as a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land'. So, I would like to conclude by reading a few lines from the section 'the Burial of the Dead' of T.S. Eliott's *The Waste Land*:

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man,
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only
There is shadow under this red rock,
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock) ...